Braxton County Annual Report 2018

Putting Knowledge to Work!

The West Virginia University Extension Service works to provide solutions in your community through key programs and resources, including agriculture and natural resources; 4-H and youth development; food and nutrition; health and wellness; financial planning; and home gardening. These research-based programs and services are available to all Braxton County residents thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners, including the Board of Education and County Commission.

4-H and Youth Development

Activities:

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- The traditional 4-H events conducted provide educational and skill-building opportunities for more than 100 4-H members and Cloverbuds (pre-4-H age). Braxton County currently has seven community 4-H clubs. Because of their involvement in Braxton County 4-H activities, youths are more likely to obtain well-paying jobs, create their own businesses and contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

Special Interest Programs

- In cooperation with Mid-State Archers, our 4-H archery program continues. The state qualifier for the national competition is hosted in Braxton County. This year, a Braxton County 4-H member will be competing at the national 4-H archery competition.

- Once a month, 4-H STEM programming is offered after school at the Sutton and Burnsville public libraries. This programming provides an opportunity for youths to join 4-H even if they are unable to participate in a community 4-H club.

Camping

- In 2018, 60 Braxton County 4-H members attended 4-H camp which was staffed by 24 adult volunteers. Six Cloverbuds joined us for one day of fun as they started learning about our 4-H camp traditions.

- A new Council Circle was constructed and dedicated on the first night of 4-H camp. The new site is more accessible and safer for campers and staff.

Braxton County Fair

- The Braxton County fair is the major show event for 4-H and FFA members with livestock projects. This year alone, 4-H and FFA members earned nearly $2,500 in premiums.

- Those with market animal projects sold $70,275 at the annual 4-H and FFA livestock sale.
• An additional $4,000 in scholarships were distributed to 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors.

Highlights:

Beef Quiz Bowl Team
• The Braxton County senior quiz bowl team finished second place out of 15 senior teams. The junior team placed third out of 20 teams.

Beef Stockman’s Contest
• For the second year in a row, Braxton County seniors were the highest scoring team at the contest. Several members placed in the top of the contest which had more than 400 participants.

Forestry Judging Team
• The Braxton County junior team placed first in the state contest. Our single senior contestant finished first in her division.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Farm Bureau
• We partnered with the Braxton County Farm Bureau to provide monthly educational programs, covering topics such as farm insurance, property taxes, weed control in pastures, animal health and beyond.

Calf Pool
• 288 calves were marketed through the Central Calf Pool, realizing an increase return of $62.77 per head over stockyard returns for a total of $18,077.76.

WVU Master Gardeners
• The WVU Extension Service Master Gardener program provides an opportunity for people to increase their horticultural knowledge and sharpen their gardening skills. In 2018, 13 Master Gardeners were recertified. These Master Gardeners provided 457 volunteer hours on nine different projects with a value of $23,345.74.

Local Foods
• We trained farmers market vendors so they can accept vouchers from the farmers market nutrition program. This program provides low-income senior citizens access to fresh, locally grown produce. Of the 2,975 senior farmers market coupons issued in Braxton County, 2,552 (86%) were redeemed. Those coupons allowed seniors the opportunity to buy fresh fruits and vegetables and provided producers with a guaranteed market for $10,208 products.

• As Braxton County producers compete in local food markets, more of the food dollar stays in the county. In addition, buying local, fresh produce has benefits related to healthy eating and nutrition. We also provided educational and diagnostic resources to local growers.

Family and Community Development
Health and Nutrition:

- A $5,000 ($52,500 total since 2012) grant was secured from Partners in Prevention to sustain the Braxton Healthy Families Healthy Children Coalition.
  - Through this grant, we offered and sponsored a series of events to strengthen families by offering opportunities for free or low-cost family time. We had more than 800 people participate in the father-daughter ball, community baby shower, Take a Kid Fishing Day at Burnsville Lake and JAKES Day at Holly Gray Park.
  - We also had 206 individuals participate in 19 classes focusing on relationships, financial education, parenting and child abuse prevention.

- Nearly 500 youths and adults participated in 22 educational classes and activities focusing on health and wellness, including topics such as healthier holiday celebrations, basic nutrition, physical activity and yoga for children, and a kale fair at a local elementary school.

- Nutrition education participants were taught how to make the following changes: increase water intake, reduce portion size and follow serving size recommendations, eat more fresh vegetables, plan healthy meals, read food labels, and use healthy substitutions and recipes.

- The Healthy Grandfamilies program launched in 2018 in response to the growing prevalence of grandparents raising grandchildren as a result of the opioid epidemic in our area. 19 grandparents gained knowledge, skills and resources to help them better parent their grandchildren.

- Four pop-up markets were held throughout the county. Students at Burnsville, Little Birch, Frametown and Sutton elementary schools experienced shopping at a farmers market for fresh foods. Nutrition education, information and healthy recipes were distributed to participants.

- The Grow This challenge was held at the Braxton County fair and Sutton farmers market, where approximately 250 people planted seeds and learned about the growing process.

- Elementary school youths received water bottles and a children’s book on drink choices called “Potter the Otter: A Tale About Water” as a part of the Rethink Your Drink program. The program also was offered at Braxton County 4-H camp and taught youths to stay hydrated by drinking more water and less sugary beverages.

- Show Me Nutrition classes reached more than 400 students at the elementary schools in Braxton County.
  - 93% of students reported an increase in diet quality.
  - 56% of students reported increased food safety practices.
  - 56% of students reported an increase in physical activity.
  - 55% of students indicated an increase in reading food nutrition labels.

- The Braxton County Community Educational Outreach Service continued their service to the county by supplying the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources office in Braxton County with care bags for children removed from their homes, making specialty pillows for cancer patients who have lost their hair, providing breast cancer awareness information to the public, hosting fundraisers to support community programs like Hearts of Hope, reading to
children in schools, providing scholarships to local students continuing their education after high school and more.

Tourism and Economic Development:

- The WVU Extension Service office in Braxton County worked with local groups and organizations to attract visitors to Braxton County and make their stay more enjoyable.
- We worked closely with the Braxton County fair to publicize and promote the fair and assist with the regional advertising campaign. The Braxton County fair is the largest event in Braxton County attracting more than 6,300 fairgoers in 2018.
- We promoted agritourism opportunities in Braxton County working with the town of Sutton to promote the success of the farmers market.
- Well-kept and supportive communities are more welcoming to visitors. Our volunteers – Master Gardeners, CEOS members, and 4-H members and leaders – were involved in a variety of beautification and community service projects that make Braxton County a better place to live and visit.